

Review

**Arts Renaissance Tremont —
Bach's Birthday Bash (March 21)**

by J.D. Goddard



On Friday, March 21, Trinity Cathedral Chamber Singers and instrumentalists, directed by Elizabeth Lenti, presented a “Bach Birthday Bash” concert at Pilgrim Church, presented in collaboration with the Arts Renaissance Tremont series. It was a beautiful setting in the renovated sanctuary with its ornate organ pipes the center of attention. The welcome from the church staff

was especially commendable and made for a comfortable beginning to the evening’s fare.

The program opened with Lenti at the organ performing the *Prelude and Fugue in A minor*, BWV 543. With confidence and agility, Lenti laid down an exacting performance filled with interpretive nuance and style befitting the brilliance of Bach’s compositional genius. Infused with rambling melismatic lines, the Prelude was straightforward yet exacting in articulateness. With sensitive control and solid bravura, Lenti discharged the difficult Fugue with poignant clarity and acute definition. It was a majestic and awe-inspiring opening for Bach’s birthday celebration 2014.

Next came a selection from Cantata 78, *Jesu, der du meine Seele*, featuring sopranos Judith Overcash, Erin Smith, and Malina Rauschenfels performing the duet “Wir eilen mit schwachen, doch emsigen Schritten” (We hasten with feeble footsteps). This was a combination of wonderfully matched voices with superb accompaniment featuring harpsichordist Andrew Roseblum and cellist Daniel Lin. The ornamentation by the singers was exceptional. Especially noteworthy was their use of straight tone.

Two arias from the “Coffee” Cantata, BWV 211, “Ei, wie schmeckt der Coffee Susse” and “Heute noch, lieber Vater, thut es doch” were splendidly portrayed and sung by soprano Malina Rauschenfels with coffee in hand, backed up by a superb ensemble of eight strings, bassoon and harpsichord. Her exceptional vocal range, strong acting abilities and coquettish whimsy made for an exceptional performance. She was definitely going to have that cup of coffee no matter what her father said!

Now it was the ensemble's turn to shine as violinist Jinjoo Cho and oboist Tamer Edlebi stepped to the front to perform Bach’s *Double Concerto in C minor*, BWV 1060R. Cho and Edlebi together wove a sensitive and dynamic musical web of artistry as they tra-

versed the many delicate and dynamic nuances of Bach's music. Cho's understanding of Bach's style was exceptional and she aptly blended her talents into an expansive performance of agility and interpretive excellence.

Closing out the evening's fare were the eight voices of Trinity Chamber Singers, who joined the chamber orchestra to perform "Sheep May Safely Graze" from the Hunting Cantata, BWV 208 and "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" from Cantata 147. Despite a few minor balance and blend issues, Lenti and the musicians delighted the audience with these selections and put the final touches on an evening of wonderful Bach. The one-hour length of the program provided just enough of the composer's music to leave one with a "desiring" to hear more.

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